

Introduction

This Summary is a companion document to the main Closure Statement. It is tailored for those whose principal interest is the proposed Redress Scheme; those seeking greater depth of information and background will find it in the full Closure Statement.

In the main Closure Statement, the Trustees of the Jesus Fellowship Community Trust have reiterated publicly that they are deeply sorry for, and appalled by the abuse that occurred in the Jesus Fellowship Church (JFC) and the residential New Creation Christian Community (NCCC). They offer an unreserved apology to all those affected, and that is repeated here.

The Jesus Fellowship Community Trust is committed to fair Redress and the draft details of the scheme, including eligibility criteria and the scope of abuse and adverse experiences to be included are set out here. The final scope of Redress remains subject to ongoing legal and insurance consultation, plus current JFCT member feedback.

Note: *Since December 2020, The Jesus Fellowship Community Trust has existed solely as a residuary body with one purpose – winding up the administrative affairs of the Jesus Fellowship Church. New trustees were brought in to oversee this work, which includes implementing the redress scheme, supporting survivors and former members, and ultimately closing the Trust.*

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Background

In 2013, the Jesus Fellowship Church (JFC) invited people to make disclosures about their experiences of the organisation. Many came forward with harrowing accounts of non-recent bullying, financial, emotional, physical and sexual abuse.

This information was passed to the Police, and the allegations duly investigated. A number of criminal prosecutions followed.

The JFC has received further disclosures and as of August 2021, the total stood at 291 allegations of harm and abuse. These were made against 125 individuals, at various levels of leadership and membership of the church. In addition to the known allegations of harm and abuse, the Trustees are aware of at least a further 265 individuals who have registered for Redress and have not yet made a disclosure.

Although the vast majority of incidents have been reported recently, the allegations themselves relate to incidents ranging from the 1970s right up to 2019.

The Trustees recognise the JFC had begun to make changes prior to its closure, but they believe there were systemic problems which had a profoundly negative impact on some people's lives, in some cases exposing members to harm or abuse.

The key failings are set out in detail in the main Closure Statement.

Following the disclosure process, the National Leadership Team decided it did not have the capacity or the desire to continue the JFC and recommended to JFC members that the Church be dissolved. The members voted to revoke its constitution on Sunday, 26th May 2019. The formal Police investigations concluded in 2020.

The Trust is the organisation delivering a Redress Scheme, as part of the formal closure process agreed by its members.

Jesus Fellowship Redress Scheme

Outline Scope of the Redress Scheme

The Jesus Fellowship Redress Scheme is being set up by the Jesus Fellowship Community Trust (JFCT) to enable fair Redress to be available to those who suffered sexual, physical, emotional abuse or adverse experiences whilst living within its Community.

Please note that this outline is a draft which remains subject to ongoing legal and insurance consultation and feedback from current JFCT members.

The Scheme is intended to provide comprehensive Redress to Eligible Claimants. Eligible Claimants will be entitled to:

- (i) A written apology acknowledging what has happened to them, providing acceptance of responsibility and an assurance that lessons of the past have been learnt and shared with relevant authorities;
- (ii) For sexual, physical or emotional abuse, an award of compensation for the harm they have suffered, aligned with common law compensation awards;
- (iii) For sexual, physical or emotional abuse, an invitation to meet with a Trustee of the JFCT closing team;
- (iv) A dedicated Support Fund for individual grants towards counselling, training or other support, where the criteria for a Community Adverse Experience is met;
- (v) The return of Capital for previous members of the Jesus Fellowship Community Trust;
- (vi) The Jesus Fellowship Community Trust will also seek to address claims relating to individual employment matters. Due to their nature, these matters will be investigated on a case-by case basis.

If, after addressing all of the above categories, there is sufficient availability of the Trust's funds remaining, the Jesus Fellowship Community Trust may seek to extend the Redress Scheme scope to allow for discretionary compensation payments for those who have suffered Community Adverse Experiences.

Eligibility for Sexual, Physical or Emotional Abuse

The persons entitled to Redress under the Scheme are as follows;

Any person who can establish they are/were a member or probationary member of the Jesus Fellowship Church and/or Community and/or a child of a Family in the Jesus Fellowship Church and/or Community and;

(i) There is evidence to show that on the balance of probabilities he/she suffered;

(a) emotional abuse; and/or

(b) physical abuse; and/or

(c) sexual abuse; and/or

(d) psychiatric injury

AND

(ii) The abuse was committed, counselled or instructed by a person at that time engaged in the leadership, management, operation or supervision of the Church and/or Community and/or Community Home and/or Community School, whether as a Leader of the Church and/or Community or a person for whom the Trust would be vicariously liable;

OR

(iii) The abuse was committed by an individual invited to stay in a Communal Home by a member of the Church and/or Community in the circumstances where there was inadequate safeguarding measures in place.

Eligibility for Community Adverse Experiences

The persons who are entitled to a Support Fund grants plus any future discretionary compensation payments (if Trust funds are available following other categories), are any Eligible Claimant who;

i) was a child resident in a Jesus Fellowship Community home for 3 months or more and who can establish on a balance of probabilities that they experienced Community Adverse Experience as defined below; or

ii) was an adult resident in a Jesus Fellowship Community home and who are/were a member or probationary member of the Jesus Fellowship Community Trust, who can establish on a balance of probabilities that they experienced Community Adverse Experience as defined below.

Children in Community

For the purposes of this Scheme the following circumstances are considered Community Adverse Experiences for individuals who were children when they arrived in Community;

- i) Witnessing abuse of others (sexual, physical or emotional).
- ii) Removal as a child from parenting or domestic family unit.
- iii) Lack of safeguarding, opportunity to access medical care, protection from harm that had been reported to an adult.
- iv) Unhealthy religious practice in childhood; exorcisms and/or extreme schedule of worship which caused harm.
- v) Being denied educational engagement or educational activities owing to influence or direction of Jesus Fellowship Leaders or persons for whom the Trust are vicariously liable.
- vi) Being denied social interaction (outside of Community & preventing male/female friendships in & outside Community) owing to influence or direction of Jesus Fellowship Leaders or persons for whom the Trust are vicariously liable.
- vii) Child Labour in circumstances where there was alleged neglect or harm was caused.
- viii) Having toys, games, childhood comforts removed.

Adults in Community

For the purpose of this Scheme the following circumstances are considered Community Adverse Experiences for individuals who were adults when they arrived in Community;

- i) Harmful treatment of Women as subordinates and/or Women suffering detriment and harm through being placed in positions of servitude.
- ii) Being forced to leave a positive/stay in an abusive relationship
- iii) Prevention of access to outside world (doctors, police, social services)
- iv) Failure of individuals in position of leadership to act positively to reports of abuse or harm

Jesus Fellowship Redress Scheme: Next Steps

The Jesus Fellowship Redress Scheme is subject to ongoing legal and insurance consultation ahead of its launch.

The Trustees are also legally required to act in the interest of JFCT members, including financially, and JFCT members' views on any discretionary elements will be taken into account. The Trustees will also be seeking those views ahead of the scheme launch.

Any changes in light of both approval and member feedback will be communicated in due course.

The Trust aims to finalise the draft scope and launch the Jesus Fellowship Redress Scheme, as soon as possible, in 2022.

Further details of the Jesus Fellowship Redress Scheme, including the application process and legal costs to be covered by the Trust, will be provided at the time of launch. In the meantime, the Trust will continue to provide updates for interested parties at www.jesus.org.uk

You can register your interest in the Jesus Fellowship Redress Scheme, and to receive email updates, here: <https://jesus.org.uk/redress-scheme/>

Further Closure Phases

The Redress Scheme is being delivered as part of Phase 2 of the JFCT closure. Please see here for the closure phases and timeline: www.jesus.org.uk/timeline

Following Phase 2, including the delivery of the Redress Scheme, Phases 3 and 4 will consider requests for:

- Payment of historic 'Relief of Need'
- Under-21 contribution refunds
- Additional payments for widows / widowers
- Inclusion of former Trust members in the apportionment of any residual Trust funds

These requests do not form part of the Redress Scheme and are subject to the discretion of the Trust and its current membership. The Jesus Fellowship Community Trust aims to ensure provision of funds are available, following the Redress Scheme, for these decisions to be considered.

Those who are interested in the above items are currently asked to register here: www.jesus.org.uk/timeline/register